

Divine Arithmetick Illustrated,



In the Right and Exact Numbering of
our D A Y S.

O R A DISCOURSE O F

The Near and Continued Approaches of
Death unto every one whatever.

With the same Inference and Application which
the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15. makes from an alike
Subject,

That the Knowledge and Consideration of these
things should exhort People to be *Stedfast*,
*Unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the
Lord.*

By RICHARD STAFFORD.

*O that they were Wise, That they understood this, That they
would consider their latter End, Deut. 32. 29.*

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts
unto Wisdom, Psal. 90. 12.*

L O N D O N :

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It is appointed unto Men once to die, Heb. 9. 27.

Although Death and Mortality is an easie Subject to discourse on, because therein so very many things do lie open, common and obvious to the Knowledge of all People whatsoever, whether Learned or Unlearned, whither they be Confide-rate or Ignorant, for *The Living know that they shall die*, Eccles. 9. 5. and unless it be to stir up your Pure Minds by way of Remem-brance, it may seem superfluous to write those things which are commonly known already; yet it is safe. However, I having already published to the World many things concerning the State of the Wicked and Sinners, Ignorant and Ungodly, in their Death; and also of the Condition of Good Men in their Death, I shall here en-deavour to make known what further Thoughts do arise in my Mind concerning it, as the same do spring up from the Book of the Lord the Fountain of Truth, which I have within me by seeking and draw-ing out from thence; as also from that common Knowledge and Under-standing, which the Lord hath given to me as a Creature.

And that knowing the Time, that now it is High Time to awake out of sleep, for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed. The Night is far spent, the Day is at hand. Knowing that our Days are continu-ally passing on, one after another, to that State or kind of Being, which shall never pass away, It is certainly *High Time* to rouse up and bethink our selves throughly; for the things of which we have been so often fore-told and fore-warneD, I mean the things con-tained and spoken of in Scripture, which relate unto that God with whom all Creatures *have to do*; and must receive from him Blessing or Curseing, Happiness or Misery: And also the things concerning the *World to come*, whereof the Scripture it self, and those instrncted with the Ministry thereof, do all along speak: All this is nearer than when we first believed, and draws nearer and nearer day by day, to morrow it will be nearer than to day, and the next day after that nearer than to morrow, and so on. We do day by day and night after night approach nearer and nearer to the unseen things, and to the unseen State, which is Eternal, for the things which are not seen are Eternal. *The Night is far spent:* With us severally acc-ording as our Years are, it is evident a great deal of our Life is gone, past and behind.

I liked very well the Expression of a Man which I once heard; when it was told him, such an one was near about forty Years of Age;

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Age ; He said thereupon, *That forty Years was a large stride towards the Grave :* And truly so it is, for it is a striding half way at the utmost Computation of Man's Life at fourscore Years. But at the usual reckoning of threescore Years and ten, a Year is three hundred threescore and five days and six hours ; which every fourth Year makes three hundred threescore and six. So that cast up all this together, it amounts to near about five and twenty thousand, five hundred and sixty seven days and twelve hours. Here is the exact number of our days, if one was sure to live seventy Years. But how many Thousands and Millions do come short of it ? who either pass away as the untimely Fruit of a Woman, or dye in their Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Manhood, or declining Years, before they come to this old Age. So that admitting that any one should certainly come to threescore Years and ten, as a thousand Paces make a Mile, the length of his Journy or Pilgrimage may be reckoned up at about twenty five Miles and an half; and it is a going one Pace each day and night ; or seeing that two strides make a Pace, it is a going two strides towards it, one in the day and another in the night. And thus we who are Inhabitants of Flesh, do continually Journy or Travel on towards the Land of Eternity. And so it is proportionably according to the number of the Days, and Weeks, and Months, and the Years, which the Lord of Life, whose are the Times and Seasons, do lend to every Man here on this Earth. Do not reckon this to be an odd and an unusual kind of writing, thus to cast up Numbers, for if ye read in *Daniel*, and in some places of the *Revelations*, ye will there find and meet so much of this nature, as if the Spirit of God did delight in summing and casting up of Numbers. So that what we have here mentioned, doth not derogate, vary or alter from that true and sound Preaching by the Spirit, or at least from those common Assistances of the Spirit, which are given to every Minister of Christ, according as he is Faithful and Diligent in the Ministrion of the Gospel.

After that the Spirit of God by *Moses* had cast up the Number of our days to be threescore Years and ten, or fourscore Years, he goes on to add, *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* One saith well, The numbering of our days is the best kind of Arithmetick. And truly to me, when I thus cast up and compute it in my Mind, nothing doth so much give me a true, through and lively sence (if I may so express it) even of Mortality it self. Here is the Use and Instruction of it, To apply our Hearts unto Wisdom. There is a difference between bare thinking of a thing, and to set ones Heart, or to *apply ones Heart* unto it. And so it is as to the Sinners and Godly People, for even Sinners do think a little in the General concerning Religion, that Heavenly and Spiritual Wisdom ; for indeed they cannot help it, and they cannot do other-

otherwise, inasmuch as the Words thereof, and the Sound thereof is gone out to the Ends of the Earth ; there is so very much Talking and Preaching thereof in this Island ; there is so exceeding much in the Scriptures of Truth, which almost every Family hath in its House, that there is none so much a stranger in *England* who hath not heard of these things. What things ? Concerning God, and another Life, and the World to come. But as to Sinners and the Ungodly, all this amounts to no more than to a certain Rumour or Report, or a Sound, without a thorough Knowledge and distinct Apprehension of what all these things mean ; they think of them, because they are forced to think of them sometimes, but they do not set and apply their Hearts unto them. And so it is the very same concerning the Numbering their Days, their latter End and Death. Who is there, even amongst the Ignorant and Ungodly Multitude, yea amongst those who are most Despisers and backward in Nature towards the Ministry of the Word, that doth not know in the General how Old they are ; how that time and their Days do pass away, and how that they must Dye at last. No Body whatever can be Ignorant of or not know this, because it is Sensible and Evident. But it is too certain again, that they do not for all this, *Apply their Hearts unto the true Wisdom.* That is, To set about it in good Earnest ; for they do not Understand what it is, nor Labour after it : But they are Careless and Negligent, as pertaining thereto. Whereas Contrariwise the Righteous and Godly do so apply their Heart, as to Mind nothing in Comparison thereto, but they bring all things in Subordination to it.

Nothing remains in a Man, but what he doth in the Service of God, and for the Good of his own Soul. All his other Acts and Actions perish in the using, and if they do not come under that End, they had much better be not done at all ; for whatever is of Sin or Evil, that tends to sad Account, or Loss at the last Day. And that is Wisdom indeed, and nothing else is so, which procures Good unto a Man's self, and avoids Evil : Which nothing doth so certainly effect, according to his own Ordering and Establishment of things (taking in things to come, all one as things present) as the Service of God, and the keeping of his Commandments. For if there was nothing else therein (as there is Ten Thousand times more) it appears much better, and more excellent on this Respect, That whereas all other things perish and pass away, and so doth all the Glory of Man pass away as the Flower of the Grass : But he that doth the Will of God, abideth for ever.

Religion, our Duty to God, is not only throughout the Book of *Proverbs*, but in several other places of Scripture, called *Wisdom*, as particularly in that saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* But also it may be Proved, Evidenced and Demonstrated

monstrated to be the only Real and true Wisdom; and all Despising, Neglect and Variation from it to be the greatest Folly. To shew or treat of this particularly, and at large would be somewhat besides the present intended Subject. But as certain of the Ancients defined the sum and whole of *Wisdom* to be a *Meditation of Death*, and that upon this or the like Reason, because it would Influence a Man's whole Life and Conversation unto Wise and Good things; it being Reasonable to do those things, whilst Living, which one shall wish he had done when he comes to Die. And also nothing is so much worthy the Concern and Regard of a Wise Man, as Death is. It is every ones Prudence to keep off, and provide against all Evils whatsoever; and if the World calls them Wise, who are so much busied about the getting of Riches or Honour, about the attaining of every little seeming Good and avoiding every little Evil that may beset them; much more will he (who is *Wise unto Salvation*) be so as to the greatest and most enduring things which are to come and will quickly be Manifested before us with open Face. If every one is Concerned, how it goes with him now, much more should a Rational and Understanding Man look about him, both take thought, and also take care, what shall become of him, after this vain, short and uncertain Life is Ended.

Truly this was my manner of doing, from my tender Years, and from my Youth up. As it is written, *That Isaac went out to Meditate in the Field at Even-tide*: So I can Remember that when I was but a School-Boy, and so when I went first to the University; whereas others of my Fellows and Contemporaries were all for Play and Company, I would rather choose to Walk all alone by my self, and in some Solitary place, Meditate partly upon the Works of God's Creation: All which being then new and fresh to my Mind, did Seem to me in the Phrase of the same Isaac, *To be as the Smell of a Field which the Lord hath Blessed*. For I did then perceive Sweetness, Beauty and Delight in them, though I do now confess, that, having beheld them so very often, I have since lost that just Wonder and Astonishment which I had formerly in beholding them: For it hath Diminished, and I have in a manner Ceased to be Affected therewith. There is so much in Custom and Repetition, even of the most Marvellous things; that, by continual seeing them, they cease to be Marvellous, not but that they are so nevertheless in themselves; But as the Edge grows dull by often cutting, so through Humane Infirmitie and Weakness we become dull of Hearing, and dull of Seeing, and dull of Understanding, when it is continually upon the same Object. But as the same Isaac could say, *Behold now I am Old, I know not the Day of my Death Gen. 27. 2.* So when I was but very Young, this was the Subject that I did most Think and Meditate on, though I was then Young, Yet I did not know the Day of my

my Death; for so much was Sensible and Evident to me, and I had so much Understanding as then to Apprehend, that Young Boys were Liable unto Death, and several of them did Die, all one as People of Riper or Declining Years, or in Old Age. I then knew well enough of the suddenness of Death, and that we always carry the *Root of the matter* about us, even those Seeds of Mortality and Corruption; we being but like brittle Glass, which can be dashed or broken in a Moment. Yea, when I was a Child, I Spake as a Child, I Understood as a Child, I Thought as a Child; I could even then Discern that the longest Day would have a Night, that though this Life (which is as a Vapour, and continueth not) Should be extended up to Youth, Manhood (I am now passing this Second Stage of Life) Declining Years, or Old Age, yet at last an end would come, *the end is come*, Ezek. 7. 4. And now I can Reason this as a Man, that nothing is long which hath an End: But now I call to Remembrance my Thought, and Searching of Heart, which was in the Days of Old, the Years of Ancient Times, when I was but a Stripping, I did then commune with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made diligent Search, What will become of me, after that this Body which now I carry about me, is laid in the Earth? For I did find even then, that my Spirit would Abide and Liv elsewhere, as truly God hath shewn this unto me, even from *within* my self, ever since I was a Child, and had the least Knowledge of Good and Evil, that there was another Life, and another State which People should enter upon, and go into, after that they are departed off from this Earth. I was all along, and am still as verily Persuaded, and as certained of it, as I am sure, that at the writing these Lines, I now Live and Breath. And thereupon Revolving and Pondering many things in my Mind, how that all things here are but vain, little, and passing away as a Shadow, and do not signify much, fain would I be happy and safe, as to the Succeeding and Eternal State of things, into which my Soul must Launched forth out of this Body. So I came at length to be acquainted with the Ways of God; and I have made it my Business to serve him, although it hath been all along (which I desire to acknowledge in bitterness of Soul) accompanied with too many Failings and Imperfections, and comings short of what the Lord hath Required of me.

It should be a constant Rule, that whosoever I declare and make known my own Experiences, there the Reader or Hearer should confer Notes, and compare it at the very same Instant with those Experiences of his own; for there is nothing like to this Experimental Kind of Preaching, when a Minister doth inwardly feel what himself doth Speak, and Speak out what himself doth feel; for we are Fellow Servants and Fellow Travellers; and God, who *Fashioneth the Hearts of the Inhabitants of the Earth alike*, Psal. 34. 15. doth bring

bring all his Sons and Daughters unto Glory, by near the same way, in all their several Generations and Countreys. All of them that ever did, or shall come to Glory, they were every one of them, *so wise as to Consider their latter End.* Saith one of them, *Lord make me to know mine End, and the Measure of my Days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am.* And so, when we Read the History of the Saints, and Servants of God in *Hebrews*, this general Character is given of them all, They confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth, for they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a Countrey, *Heb. 11. 13, 14.* And if they seek a Countrey, they must be mindful of that Entrance or Passage which lets into that Countrey, which is Death. A Stranger or Pilgrim, are Relative Words, and do Relate unto somewhat, to which they should be acquainted, and to somewhere they should be at home. Now God is the Father of Spirits, to whom they are Related, and with whom they should be acquainted, according to what is written, *Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at Peace,* Job 22. 21. Though a Stranger is not acquainted and known in such a place; yet others, elsewhere, do know him. And so God is acquainted with all Men, as they are his Creatures; *Thou art acquainted with all my Ways,* Psal. 139. 3. Though alas too many are not acquainted with him. And then mention is made in *Ecclesiastes*, *That Man goeth to his long Home, and the Mourners go about the Streets.* So that he is a Pilgrim all the while he is on this Earth. They are all so in Deed and Reality, but few do confess themselves to be so, that is, Strangers and Pilgrims, and declare plainly that they seek a Countrey, so as not to be Mindful of that Countrey they now are in, no further than barely to Furnish them with Necessaries and Accommodations for their intended Passage and Journey; but not to sit down, or settle any Abode or Dwelling-place herein, for a Stranger or Pilgrim doth denote one who is in a Travelling and Moving Posture, and they are not long in a place; and also they have a fixed, certain and intended Place or End, to which they make, or otherwise they are but Wanderers. And again it is certain, as long as they are Travelling and Moving, if they are set aright, every minute they draw nearer and nearer to their home, or to the place where they would be. Now whereas many People would willingly stay here always, by their Good-will, it shall not be so, for as the Soul here is in Prison, so it is a Moveable Prison, or a Moveable Waggon, and the Wheels thereof are always going, until the Appointed Time when they shall Cease, and let out the Soul into the Invisible World. Thus much is sensible and evident that the Pulse is always beating towards its last stroke.

It is appointed unto Men once to die. This Particle, *once*, makes it yet more terrible, and raises in it yet greater Thought and searching
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of Heart ; for we do more dread, and are more apprehensive of things which we were never sensible of, nor had experienced before. Of so many Millions since the Creation of Man upon the Earth, we read or hear of but very few that did return again after they were passed into the Gates of Death : We read of some, as of Lazarus, and the Saints that arose at our Saviour's Crucifixion and Resurrection, *Mat. 27. 52, 53.* but none are recorded, who gave an exact account how or what manner of thing it is to dye, how much Pain they did undergo therein, or how the Bitterness of Death did taste ; and how it was with the Soul in the separated State ; this is left to every one of us to know and feel. It is as natural a thing to dye as it is to live, for we are appointed to that all one as to be born, or to pass through a little mean while here : It is only to break that which was liable to be broken before, or to melt down that which was meltable.

Suppose that any one who shall hear or read this, were to dye at such a day certain, about a Month, or six Weeks, or a quarter of a Year hence ; and it is likely enough to be some ones Condition, How would such a Message possess that Soul with fear and surprize ? God, who hath determined the Times before appointed, *Act 17.26.* doth know exactly the day of the Month, and the Year, with the Place, and also the manner, with what Sicknes, or outward Accident or Casualty each of us shall dye, for it is certain to God but unknown to us. So it is of all the Sons and Daughters of Men, although some of them are now Healthy, Lusty and strong. If death is not most commonly sudden, yet Sicknes or Casualty is always sudden, which in a week or an hours time will cut down the Tree to the Ground, and fetch out the Soul to give an account for the Deeds done in the Body. The Lord of Life knows all by our Names ; and who would now think that such a Person and such a Person (according as he appoints and marks them out in his own order) shall die such a day and in such a place, and of such a Disease or Accident. This same Tongue which hath spoken forth his Truths, shall one day faulter and be laid flat in my Mouth, and then turn into Corruption, and next to nothing. These very same Eyes that see at this day, shall sink into my Head, and behold Man no more with the Inhabitants of the World. And these Hands which have hitherto handled the Pen of the Writer, shall either be tyed and bound up with Grave-cloths ; or they will be in that fixed and unmoveable Posture, that there will be no need of tying or binding at all. When we once come into the place of Skulls or dry Bones : There will be then nothing to be seen of Personal Deformity or Lameness, or who in the days of their Flesh were cloathed with a beautiful, well-coloured, or with a common or ordinary Skin. We know not particularly when this shall be, but we know certainly that once it shall be, *It is appointed to Men once to die.*

It was Melancholly Tidings of *Samuel* to *Saul*, Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee, and to morrow thou and thy Sons shall be with me (that is in the State of the Dead, as God saith in *Ezekiel* of others, that he would bring them down to the People of Old Time) then *Saul* fell straightway all along upon the Earth, and was sore afraid, Because of the words of *Samuel*, and there was no Strength in him, for he had eaten no Bread all the day, nor all the night. Truly such a Message to any of us, would be apt to turn our Stomach against Food. It would spoil our Supper, and cause that we should not so well relish our moderate necessary Eating, if God should say to any of us, *This night thy Soul shall be required of thee*, Luke 12. 20. Or if we did hear from any one for certain, who is now in the State of the Dead, To morrow thou shalt be with me; we also would be sore afraid, and our Souls would as it were before-hand shiver within us, before they take flight into the invisible World; as appears by Poor Malefactors when they come to the place of Execution. There is no need to seek unto familiar Spirits (as *Saul* did here, which he did not neither, until God had before departed from him) and unto Wizards that peep and mutter, Should not a People seek unto their God? for the Living to the Dead? Isa. 8. 19. Which last doth seem to import, as if it was an incongruous thing to seek to the Dead for the Living. But the other is very Proper and Reasonable, That a People should seek unto their God. And truly, If People would seek unto their God; who gives his Answer now out of his written Word, all one as he did of old Time from his *Urim* and *Thummim*, they may by that, as also by Prayer, know their End, and the measure of their days, in near upon as certain and exact a manner, as if they should hear one speaking unto them from the Dead, a Week, Month, Quarter, half a Year or Twelvemonth hence, or so many Years hence thou shalt be with me, or such a Night of such a Year thy Soul shall be required of thee; It hath been already alledged out of the written Word, and by that common Knowledge which God hath given to every Man, as also by an exact casting up of Numbers; and so it would be proportionably if it should come unto more Years; The utmost Period and Term hath been set down, beyond which none doth usually pass; and thou mayst at any time be cut short thereof. Saith one, God therefore kept the precise exact day of our Death to be uncertain and unknown; because that he would have us think every day to be our last. And if thou wouldest be certified herein for the Psalmist's Reason That I may know how frail I am. This last thou mayest know altogether so well as if God had told and repeated unto thee the particular day thou shouldest die. Wouldst thou know how frail thou art? Why, Thou art so frail, that thou art subject and liable unto Death every day of the Week, yea every hour, and every minute. The Sinner and Ungodly would know this, Because he would Eat and Drink, for

To morrow we shall die. Because he would proportion out his Pleasure and Sensuality accordingly, and come in such a time towards the close of the day, by a Partial, Feigned and Temporary Repentance ; for there is hardly any Person so sinful, but hath some little Hopes, and would do somewhat towards the getting the Favour of God, and to go to Heaven if he may be admitted. Whereas, as God has now ordered the Matter, such base mercenary and selfish Souls may be deceived, but God will not be articed with. Even Godly and Righteous People have that which favours of Men, and of the Heithly and Corrupt Nature, That if they were sure to live twenty, thirty, forty or fifty Years longer, they would abate and diminish from their former Zeal and Fervency and Diligence in the Service of God. But now the Father having kept the Times and Seasons in his own Power, when he will Summon them to die, and after that to Judgment, the knowledge and consideration hereof doth oblige them continually to be upon their watch and duty, that whensoever he cometh he may find them so doing. To have their Loins be girded about, and their Lights burning. *And ye your selves like unto them that wait for the Lord when he shall return from the Wedding, That when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.* And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so doing, *Blessed are those Servants* (as the four and twenty hours are divided into four Watches, each six hours making a Watch, so Childhood, Youth, Manhood, Old Age, are the four Watches of the Term of Mans Life) *Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh in an hour when ye think not,* Luke 12. 35, 36, 37. We should so live, as if every day was to be our last day, as if we should die when we go to Bed, or as if we were to be executed and suffer death to morrow Morning. So live the remaining part of this day and to your lives end, as if certainly this was thy Condition. For though it may be ten thousand to one that thou shalt not actually die within these twenty four or eight and forty hours; yet certainly and without all doubt, this is the Case and Condition of us all, That e're long this earthly House must be dissolved, and we must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive for the things done in the Body, whither they be Good or Bad ; so that it will be near the same thing in God's account, and to thine own Imputation and receiving, seeing that of every day after years of Knowledge and discretion thou shalt be called to an Account, as if thou wert to die for certain before another and second Revolution of the Sun over thine head. How doth any Person presume to live in that Condition in which he is afraid to die ? For God will all one enter into Judgment, and call People to an account for the same, all one as if they did die in the very Act of such or such sins. And so it is of the several deeds already done, now in doing, or to be done in the body. Each thing now is just done, and then it passes into Judgment ; for

we shall be called in question and to give account for each day's Transactions. And if as Christ saith, *Sufficient unto the day is the Evil thereof.* So if we would have Boldness and Comfort at the last and great Tribunal, we should in the mean while look well unto it, and give heed and use our utmost diligence and endeavour; that to counterpoise for the Evil of each day, some Good should be done, something for the Glory of God, and for the Good of his Church and People, as also for the Edification and Advancement of our own Souls in Righteousness and true Holiness. That it may be pronounced at last to our endless and unspeakable rejoicing, when all the days of this Life shall come to be rehearsed as they now pass, though it will be hardly said as to the best Saints and Servants of the Lord (for all come short of the Glory of God, *Rom. 3. 23.* and of what he hath required) sufficient unto the day is the Good thereof, yet in each day somewhat was the Good thereof. Every rising of the Sun, and setting of the same sets us somewhat nearer to the general and final Audit, the great day of Account and Retribution to every one according to his Works. Yea, so doth every minute and second (which is the least reckoning of Time, for as sixty minutes make an hour, so sixty seconds make a minute) and this Time is in continued flux and passing on, until it comes to be determined and swallowed up in that last Period when Time shall be no longer. Like as a little Brook or River loses it self when it ends and empties it self into the great and wide Ocean. As the shadow upon the Dial is always moving (though to us it seems very slow) As the streams of a swift running River do continually pass by: As the little sands in an Hour-glass are for the most part running; Yea, This whole sublunary Creation is made up of change and perishing things, the World pasteth away and the Fashion thereof, and day after day, and night after night, they haste nearer unto the Eternal and Irreversible state of things: so our selves, Men and Women, being a part thereof, we are now in the same transitory and dying Condition, and we do always approach yet nearer in time unto that state, wherein as to the Earth as now it is, and as to this Mortal Body and outward Flesh and Blood, as to the manner of this short present Life, we shall be no more. But exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching,

Here the Word of Exhortation is not confined to Ministers or Priests only, but Indefinitely unto all Christians. *And so much the more* (Mark, give heed unto and obey that) as ye see the Day Approaching, even the Day of Death and Immortality, of Judgment, and the succeeding Eternity. Whether we Eat or Drink, Sleep or Play, Labour or are Idle, the things which shall come upon us, make haste, and do Steal and Approach unto us nearer and nearer.

As it is written, *Fools make a Mock at Sin*; So there be some who make a jest of the World to come, whereof the Scripture, and those Instructed with the Ministry thereof do speak. But it may be Proved and Demonstrated to such who have but any Sence as to Apprehend that there is a World to come in Reality, whereinto many Millions of Soul's have entered already, and our Selves are just entering into the same. It is not properly another World, but only another part of this same World, as a Room of an House. For thus much is manifest, even by Reason and Perspective Glaffles, that this Earth where we now in the Body do Inhabit, is the least part of the World, as a Point is unto the whole Globe. This may be known as a Man. And so it may be known, because it is seen, That the Day of Death to each Person is as certain as was the Day of his Birth, and it will as certainly be, as that once was. And this thing of Death, is the Gate or Door which lets and opens into what is called the Future and Invisible World. And then do appear forth the things contained in Scripture, which are the Objects of our Faith now: But then they also will be Actually Present, Visible and Manifested before us all one, as the things which we now see, handle and converse withal. But let such Unbelievers and Scoffers Consider what is written, To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence, Their Foot shall slide in due time, for the Day of their Calamity is at Hand, and the things which shall come upon them make Haste, Deut. 32. 35. It is commonly said of Old People, That they have one Foot in the Grave already. But this is certain and true of all People, both Young and Old, even Infants before they can stand, or walk on this Earth, that their and our Feet are continually sliding off from this Stage or Slippery place of the Earth, even when we sit still, or lye along upon our Beds, we are always sliding off from this Earth. *In due time*. God hath fixed out, and appointed the time when we shall be flidden off from this Earth. And the Day of Calamity to Sinners, and to such as have their Portion in this Life (for Death to them is the beginning of Sorrows) is at Hand. It is not just already come, but it is within Call, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. Looking for, and Hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, 2 Pet. 3. 12. Whether we do think thereof or not, we do certainly run, yea and fly towards it. But the holy Ghost doth Teach and Instruct us by this manner of Speech, Looking for, and Hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, that though we do move so fast towards it, yet we should even prevent it in our Thoughts: So we should think more Continually and Earnestly as we come nearer in time, and see the Day Approaching.

Conceive the Case, as so it will one time be, that we were upon our Death Bed, and Gasping for our last Breath, and were Apprehensive

henfive every Minute or Quarter of an Hour, that our Soul would take her Flight out of the Body, we know not where, What would our Soul (for every Man's Soul is himself) then give if she had it, or do, if she were able, to be assured of the Peace and Favour of God? How doth the Spirit then contract and gather it self as it were together, and run and make towards the Father of Spirits? Ones first Born, Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl: Yea, she would then give the whole World if she had it, and if such a thing were possible for to obtain his Reconciliation and Loving Kindnes. Then the same Soul that did heretofore Despise and Disobey God, is all for Honouring of, and Obeying him. But she should have done it before, for now it is too late. But even from the Thoughts of Dying Persons, we come to know and discern what would have been good for them, and what the Lord did require of them in the midst of Life, and Happy would it be, and it would be well with them if they had then so done. For this is the very top of the chiefest VVisdom to do those things whilst Living, which one shall wish he had done when he comes to Die: As also to refrain from those things, such are Sin and the Pleasures of Life, as we shall indeed wish and desire, that we had abstained and refrained from, when we come to *Die*. To approach, draw near, and stick close unto God. To wait upon him in all his Publick Ordinances (not forsaking the Assembling our selves together, and that so much the more, as ye see the *Day* Approaching) as also in all private Duties. To serve him with our utmost Power, to be a doing of Righteousness and good VWorks, Alms, Mercy and Compassion to the very utmost of our Ability.

There is indeed a Bitterness in *Death* as *Agag* truly called it. For my part I am not ashamed to own that I do Vehemently and very much Fear it. This makes me to do Sundry things Pertaining to God and Religion (which I should not do otherwise) if hereby I may somewhat take off and lessen from this bitterness of *Death*; If hereby I may store up to my self Comfort against my dying *Day*. For this Cause I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor yet of Preaching it, in (what is called) a Foolish and Contemptible manner, as I make it known unto People, in its Simplicity and purenes. For I believe that God hath chosen the Foolish things of the VWorld, and the things which are despised, *1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.* I have already Sufficiently Experienced the same, and I have been given to Understand further that this kind of doing hath been, and will be an Occasion of Loss as to VWorldly Goods: For more might be allotted unto me, if I would leave off the Preaching and Publishing the Truth of the most High God. But when I ponder it in my Mind, this same Hope of storing up to my self Comfort against my dying *Day*, doth with me weigh down all VWorldly Considerations or Temptations: And I trust in the Everliving God, that this shall be

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my Guide unto my dying Day : That I may give up an Account of the Ministry which I have received with Joy and not with Grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. The Searcher of all that is in all Hearts, knows that the very Reason why I do desire a full and greater Assembly of Hearers, and that my Books and Writings may have a more Universal Reception, is chiefly, that I may let down my Net for a greater draught of Fishes. For I know, and believe that the more Souls shall be converted, Edified or built up in their Holy Faith, by my Ministry, it will tend so much the more to their own, and also my Comfort and Rejoicing, and Crown in the last Day. But however, whether more or few will receive it, I shall endeavour, by the Divine Grace, to approve my self Faithful in the Ministry, as *Moses* was Faithful in all his House. I mean, not to lead People on (as the manner of some is) in a mere outward Profession, as if there was no more than only to come to such a place of Worship ; Or in a Partial Obedience of the Law, *Mal.* 2. 9 In that deceit so common and universal amongst those who call themselves Christians, of keeping some of the Commandments of God, and neglecting others. Or the Naming the Name of Christ, and not departing from Iniquity. Like those who call him Lord, Lord, and do not the things which he saith : So there be others of a more Religious sort, who mightily harp upon the word *Christ*, *Christ*, and yet themselves in the mean while shew forth a perverse Spirit against the Ministration of his Word ; and they refuse him that now Speaketh from Heaven through one of his least Members. Against all such I do here set my Testimony, according as I have received the same from the Word of Truth. God is most Glorified when his Servant doth follow the Conduct and Leadings of his Truth, whethersoever it goes, for this is to follow the Lamb whethersoever He goes, inasmuch as the Lamb is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And so I am determined by his Grace to go on, although in the continued Ministration, and Successive Outgoing and Emanations of his Divine Truth, Lover and Friend hast thou put away far from me and mine Acquaintance into Darkness; whether the Multitude or greater part of People do hear or forbear, receive it or not ; and so we intirely leave and submit it all to his own Divine Majest / (for God is Judge himself) when every Man shall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour, *1 Cor.* 3.8.

When Jesus did, by the Grace of God, taste Death for every Man, *Heb.* 2. 9. He thereby took away that exceeding bitterness in it for all those who will comply with the Ends of his death ; which is to die, yea and to be dead unto Sin, and to rise again unto newness of Life. But this doth not belong to the Wicked or Sinners ; for in the Hand of the Lord there is a Cup, and the Wine is Red, and it is full

full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the *dregs* thereof all the Wicked of the Earth shall wring them out and drink them, *Psal. 75. 8.* so that the same Cup of Death will taste differently unto two sorts of People. The Righteous and the Wise will taste some little Bitternes therein, wherewith also Sweetnes will be intermingled. Marvel not at this, for I know a Man to whom Sweetnes and a kind of Perfume hath arose even from the Apprehension of Death. But it will be only mixture (wherein the sowe and bitter part will make the greatest Ingredient) and dregs to the wicked of the Earth; for the sting of Death is Sin, which sting gives the Pain or smart, and it stings more or less, according as Sin is more or less in the Person who is to undergo it. So that it must be the wiser and more excellent way to stand in awe and Sin not, and to cease from our own Works. By which I mean the ceasing from those our Works, which do proceed and arise from the worldly, fleshly and corrupt Nature; for all this is our own. The Duty and Obligation hereof, appears from what is written. There remaineth therefore a Rest to the People of God; for he that is entered into his Rest, hath ceased from his own Works, as God did from his, *Heb. 4. 18.* Now Death is the entrance and passage into this Rest; and therefore if we would by this Death be translated into this Rest, we must before this Death cease from our own works, that is to say, From all such works which labour of Sin, Vanity, or of this evil World. For saith another Scripture, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them,* *Rev. 14. 13.* This is to be understood of good Works: For the doing of good Works, is the *Laying up in store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life,* *1 Tim. 6. 18.* Such who die in the Lord, did in their Life-time before live unto the Lord. And such the Gospel enjoyns peremptorily, to ma ntain good Works. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works: These things be good and profitable unto Men,* *Titus 3. 8.* For the Spirit of God in the fore-quoted place of the *Revelations* doth pronounce them Blessed, because their works do follow them. This Foundation will then stand them in stead, and they w ll be Partakers of the Loving Kindness and Reward of the Lord for the same.

I have heard of a certain atheist who being asked upon his Death-bed what he then thought concerning Religion, said on this wise, *A Good Life and Good Deeds, but all the rest was Talk and Prate.* In this last part of his sentence he spake like an Unbeliever, but as to his foregoing words this may be conceived, that the best Life and the best Deeds, without the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, will never save

save any one. The best Works, and the best Deeds, if they are mingled with any thing of self-Righteousness, or with any Thoughts of Merit, or deserving for the same, they are marred and spoiled as to God's present Acceptation and future Recompence. They are become like the Girdle that was marred and profitable for nothing, *Jer. 13. 11.* But good and observable Truth may be gathered from the former part of his saying, *A Good Life and Good Deeds.* For let the Knowledge and Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ be mixed with the same Good Life and Good Deeds. Let this same Good Life and Good Deeds be all lifted up and terminated towards God; Let all good Works be done in great Humility, self-abasement and nothingness of the Creature, He desiring that they may be accepted, clothed over with the Righteousness of Christ, and only in and through him; Then all this will, yea it doth yield sensible Comfort, and real Support against and in a dying day: For then when the Soul is just going out of the Body, and most wants help whereon to stay and fix, It may be truly said to her, there is none like unto the God of *Jesu-run,* who rideth upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his Excellency on the Sky. The Eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms (may this Scripture belong to me, when the shadow of Death sits upon my Eye-lids, and I am just breathing out my last: I had rather have it than all the Kingdoms, Lands and Riches of the whole Earth for ten thousand Years, if it was possible to enjoy them so long.) These good words and comfortable words go on to add) And he shall thrust out the Enemey from before thee (which Enemy is the Devil) and shall say, Destroy them, *Israel* shall dwell in safety alone, *Deut. 33. 26, 27, 28.* Safety and Salvation is all one in signification; and this is safety to be saved and preserved from all the Evils of the Invisible World, to get above and all alone from all the Annoyances of Evil Spirits, as also to be freed from all Sin and Temptation henceforward: Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his. But there is no dying the Death of the Righteous, without living the Life of the Righteous.

But how much Good Works, or Works of Alms, Mercy and Compassion, especially to the Ministers and Servants of the Lord, will give and procure unto the doers thereof Comfort and Support in a dying day, we may gather and understand from the words of *Paul,* *The Lord give Mercy unto the House of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my Chain,* *The Lord grant unto him that he may find Mercy of the Lord in that day,* *2 Tim. 1. 16, 18.* which is the day of Death and the day of Judgment, for then it is that any reasonable Creature most wants the Mercy of God; and the Apostle here wrote these things by the Spirit, as one that knew the Mind and Will of the Lord; for in what Prayer the Spirit of Truth doth dictate;

dictate, is included a Promise that so it shall be. And it is the same thing as if it did run on this wise, That *Onesiphorus* shall find Mercy of the Lord in the day of Death and of Judgment, for that his good Deed which he shewed forth unto *Paul* a Prisoner, Minister and Servant of the Lord.

The Holy Ghost doth record of *Dorcas*, *This Woman was full of good Works and Alms-deeds which she did*, And after that she died, the VVidows shewed the Coats and Garments (which probably were for the Poor) *which Dorcas made, while she was with them*, Acts 9. 36, 39. These things are written for our Admonition, upon whom the ends of the VVorld are come, so that this should be yet more drawn forth into Example and Imitation by the Rich People of both Sexes of our present Age and Generation, for they must severally ficken and die likewise, and then they will find *To what Purpose was this waste?* for that same Mony which they expended in fine Cloaths, Gaiety and Retinue, or making a Figure in the VVorld, in Gluttony and Drunkenness, in Pride, Pleasure, Prodigality and vain things or such like, *might have been given to the Poor*; and then it would have done themselves more good, and have stood them in more stead, than that Mammon of Unrighteousnes, or the Riches used to the hurt of the Owners. Or they might have thus consecrated their Gain unto the Lord, and their Substance unto the Lord of the whole Earth, *Micah 4. 13*. In being more willing to contribute the same yet more plentifully towards the Publishing and Propagation of his Eternal Truth; which seems to be the *Best of Works*. For this is a doing Good unto the Immortal Souls of Men, whereas common and outward Alms is only a Temporal Kindness unto the dying Body. And also that longer remains; as to which the Scripture saith, *If any Mans work abide, he shall receive a Reward*, *1 Cor. 3. 14*.

To conclude our whole Discourse, This is certain, That we must all (both Good and Bad) appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, *2 Cor. 5. 10. Unto thee shall all Flesh come*, *Psal. 65. 2*. Seeing the case is so, and there is no avoiding of it, VVhat can be a more forcible Consideration in the VVorld, since that we must appear before and come unto a Great God, who is the Great Law-giver, able to Save and to Destroy; who doth Good, so likewise he can and will Punish; VVhat manner of Persons ought we to be in this little mean while between in all Holy Conversation and Godliness? VVhat can we do too much to please and approve our selves unto him? To agree with him that was our Adversary whilst we are in the way? To do any thing to get his Reconciliation and Favour, his Peace and loving Kindness. The only way whereto he hath shewed us, is, In beginning, and then continuing and persevering

On to the end, to the day of our several respetive deaths, In the true Spiritual VVorship and Service, In the Universal Obedience of all the words of his Law and Gospel, and fulfilling all Righteousness; In doing his VVill, and every good VVord and VWork, and to do all this more and more, more diligently and more constantly as we come nearer in time and see the day approaching.

Furthermore, then we beseech you, Brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more, 1 Thess. 4, 1.

F I N I S.
